Counterinsurgency 101

1st Army (West) COIN Workshop

US Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Center

http://coin.army.mil

Lost in Translation

Video Placeholder

So what?

From ***Mens Journal,*** 21 Jan 09

…. A large blond soldier from the Pennsylvania National Guard whom we'll call "Krieger" … wants to know whom our tiny lieutenant works for. "Human terrain," Jones answers with panache. Krieger leans back and cocks a puzzled eyebrow. "You aren't one of those HT assholes who wants to talk to the locals while I sit in my MRAP for 10 hours?"

Krieger is on a roll. "Hey, I talk to the Afghans. The last time I talked to an Afghan?" — Krieger launches into a violent pantomime of beating someone up, throwing him down on the ground, and zip-tying them — "was like that."

Pretend–dusting himself off, he goes for the punch line. "And here he mimics crushing the invisible Afghan's skull with his boots and then cutting his throat with his knife.

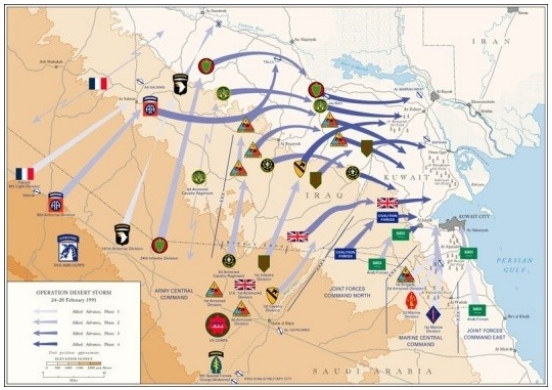
Counterinsurgency: A Mindset

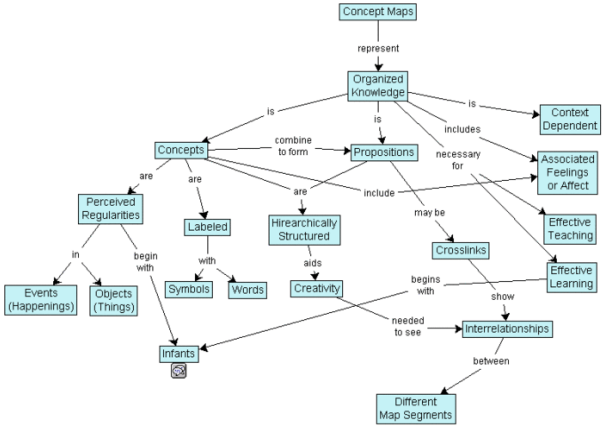
Conventional war waged on *physical* terrain…

Counterinsurgency waged on *human* terrain…

Reading a human terrain map:

- ✓ **Identify root causes**
- ✓ **View situations thru multiple cultural lenses**





Human Environment Shapes Operations

COIN Terrain

"I underestimated one factor… culture. I was looking at the wrong map – I needed to look at the tribal map not the geographic map."

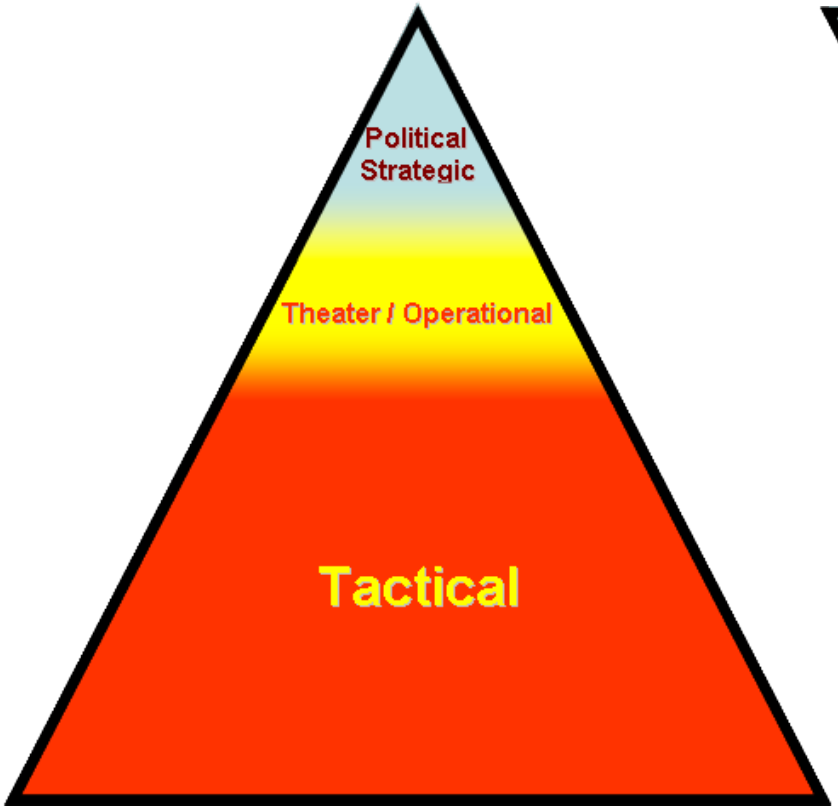
ISAF Multinational Brigade Commander, Kandahar

- **Establishing Relationships**
- **Using Interpreter**
- **Negotiating**
- **Mediating**
- **Arbitrating**

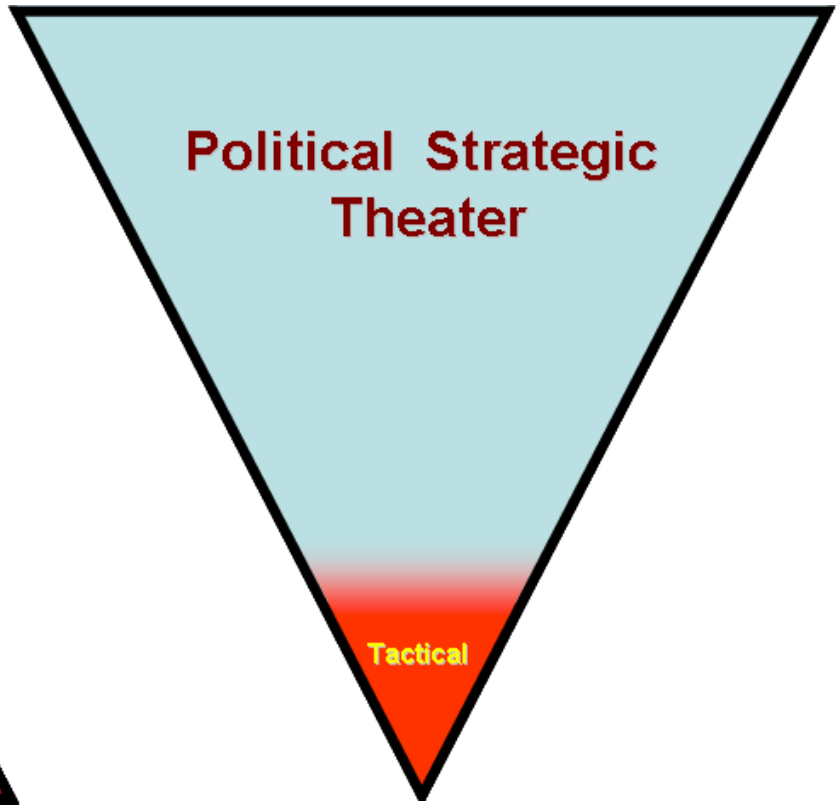
Cultural understanding is key to success

The Challenge to the Way We Think

How we tend to view things



How the insurgent views things



Tactical Actions used for Strategic Ends

© A Coord PowerPoint Ninja Graphic 20

Insurgent's Perspective

Political Mobilization is more important than Military Mobilization for a successful military outcome.

The enemy does not seek to defeat us through force of arms, but through political means

Why the Population?

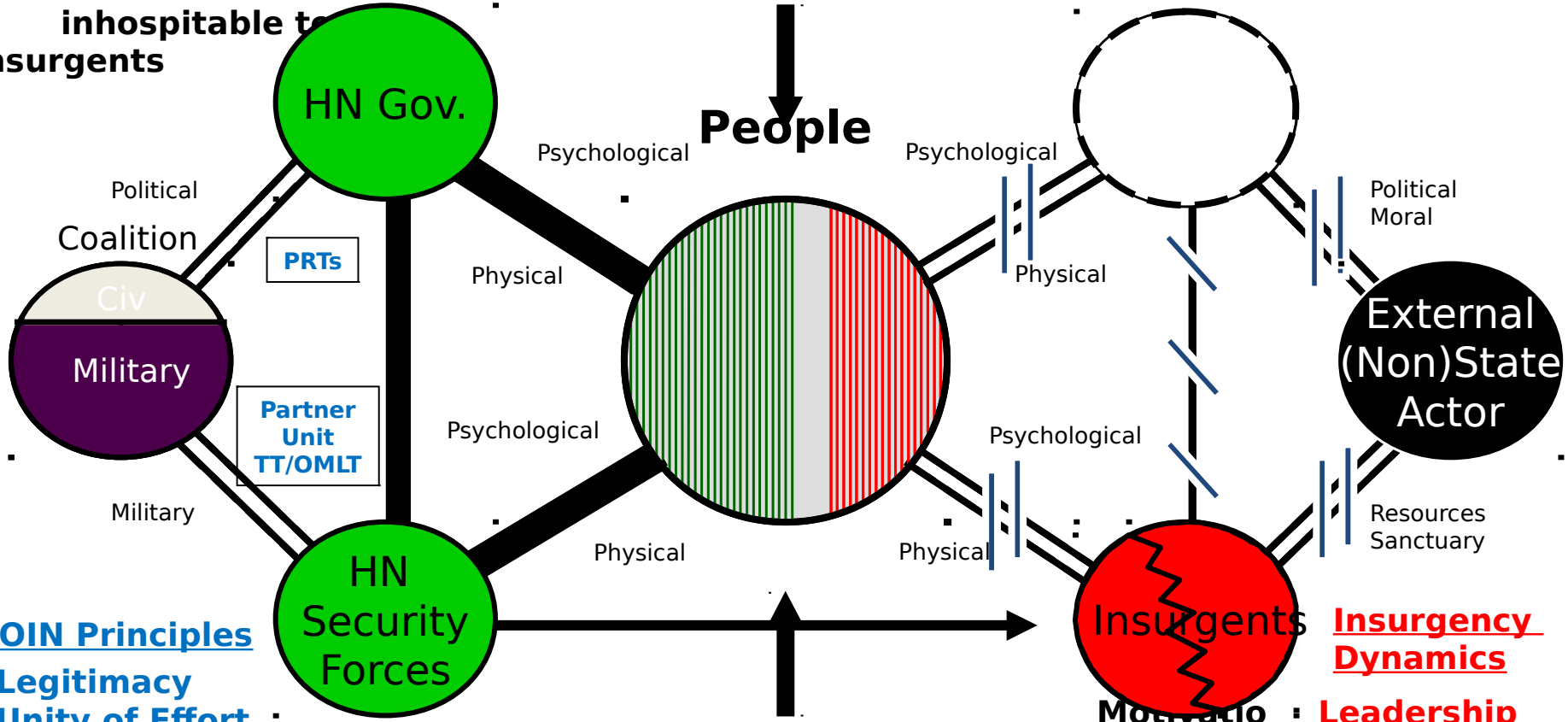
"We have seen how indispensable the support of the population is to the guerrilla. It is possible for [the guerrilla] to exist only where the people give him their unqualified support. ***It is the inhabitant who supplies the guerrilla with his food supplies … ammunition … information … warning … [and] refuge"***

- Roger Trinquier, Modern Warfare, Ch 9, 1964

Counterinsurgency Explained

Approach to Counterinsurgency

1. **Separate insurgents from Population**
2. **Connect Population to Government**
3. **Transform Environment to be inhospitable to Insurgents**



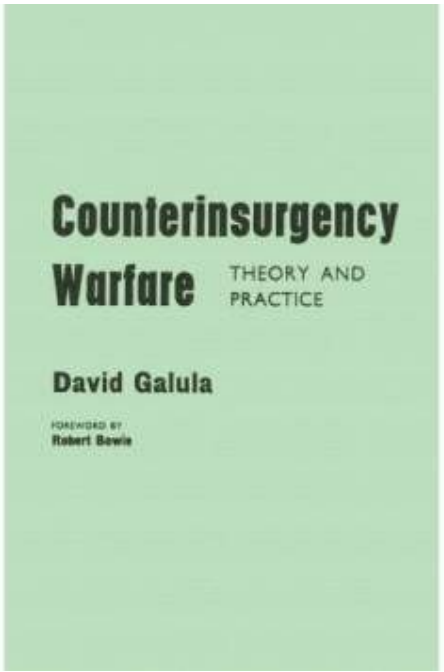
COIN Principles

- **Legitimacy**
- **Unity of Effort**
- **Political is Primary**
- **Understand the Environment**
- **Intelligence**
- **Isolate Insurgents**
- **Security under Rule of Law**
- **Long term Commitment**

Insurgency Dynamics

- **Motivatio**
- **Leadership**
- **Ideology**
- **Objective**
- **Environment**
- **External Suppor**
- **Phases**
- **Organization**

The Task at Hand



"A victory is not [just] the **destruction in a given area of the insurgent's forces and his political organization**. It is that, plus the **permanent isolation of the insurgent from the population**, isolation not enforced upon the population but **maintained by and with the population**."

David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare*, 1964

If the population is the battleground, what must be our method? How do we separate the insurgent from his base?

Ask the Right Questions

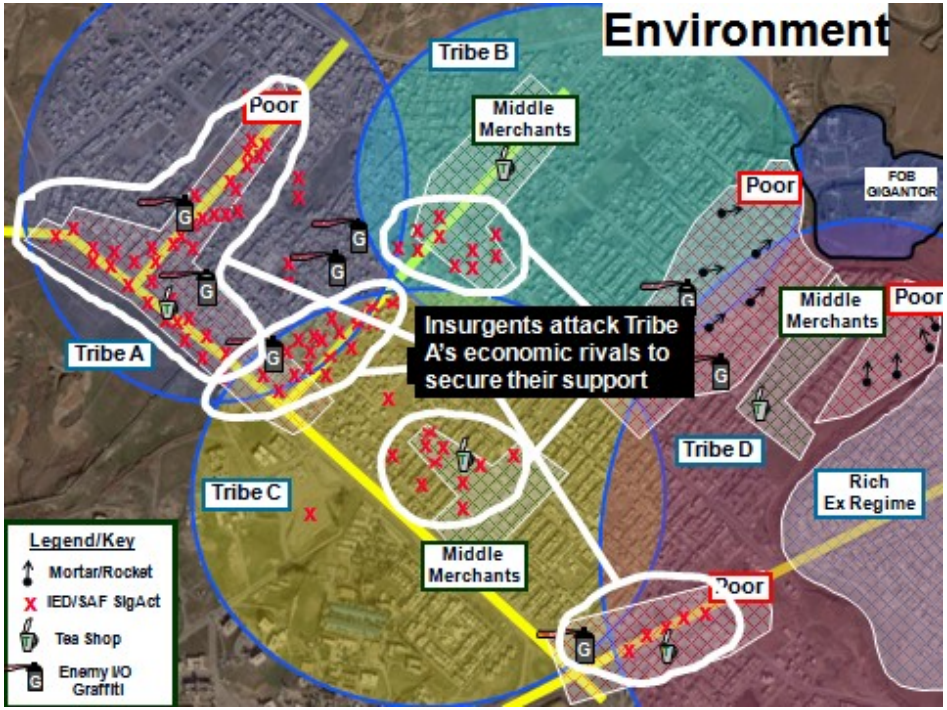
Not … *where is the enemy?*

Or even . . . *how are they organized?*

The FIRST questions are …
Where am I, and why is the enemy there?

Understanding the environment is critical for success!

Understanding, not Data



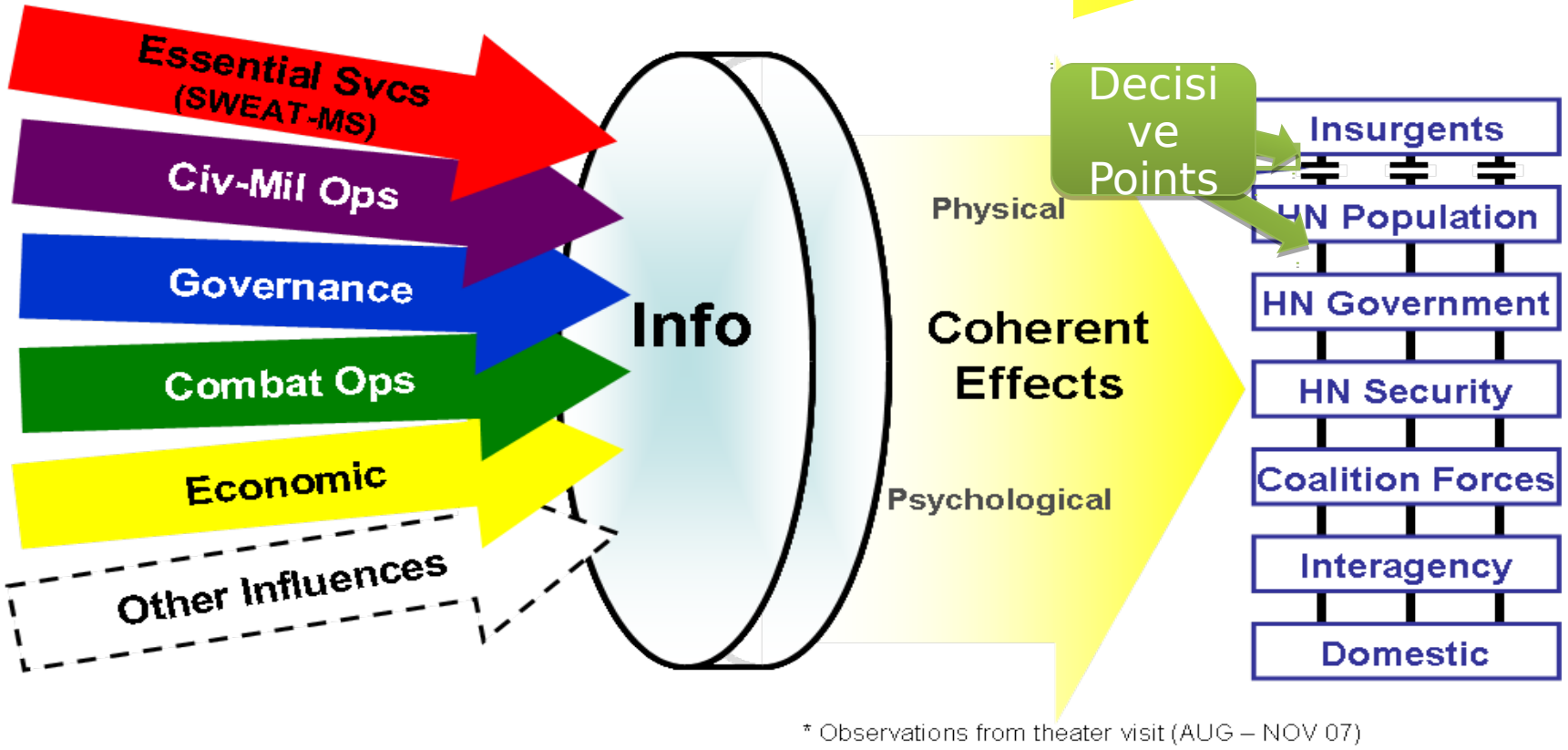
Every area is unique and must be analyzed on its own terms

Security Matters

- Insurgents leverage insecurity
- They won't help unless you can protect them
- Protect the people, and they will help you
- "Make [illegible] n't refuse"

Information as the "Lens" in COIN

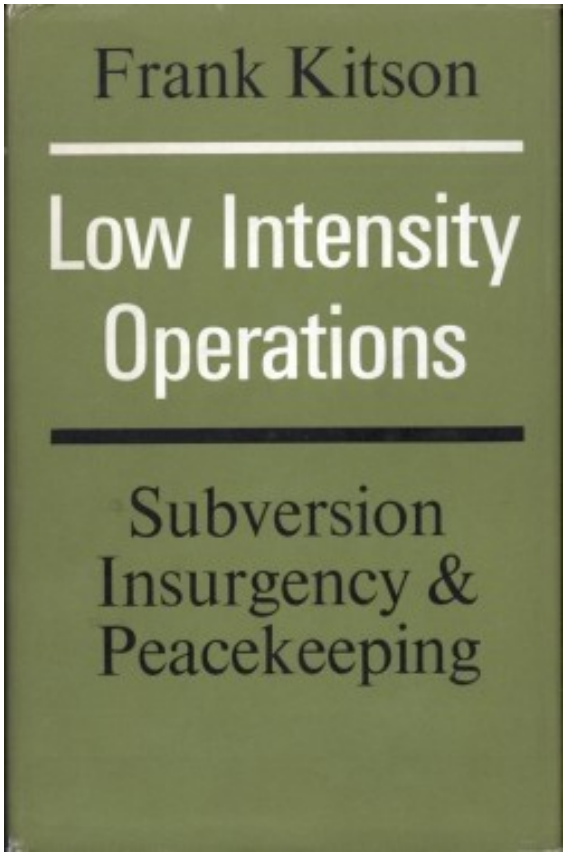
"We need an information order with an operations annex"



* Observations from theater visit (AUG – NOV 07)

What is your compelling narrative?

Intelligence



"It is essential that Soldiers and policemen should be trained to get all the information they can by overt means... The main responsibility for developing background information rests with operational commanders and not with the intelligence organization."

Frank Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations: Subversion, Insurgency, and Peacekeeping* (1971)

Intelligence Underpins All Other Activities.

Knowledge is Out There

This is not new … but it is new … use in context!

Questions?